
Promising Practice Fact Sheet – Strengthening Families

The Parent-Child Home Program (PCHP)

Program

Description:

A research-based and research-validated early childhood literacy and school readiness program that successfully strengthens families and prepares children for academic success through intensive home visiting. The program emphasizes the importance of quality parent-child interaction to promote the cognitive and social-emotional development that children need in order to enter school prepared to be successful students. Most children participate while two to three years old. (Services may go to a child as young as 16 months or as old as four years.) There are 30-minute home visits twice a week over two program years. A “program year” consists of a minimum of 23 weeks of home visits (or 46 home visits).

Target Population:

Low income parents with limited education and multiple risk factors

Goals:

Prepare young children for school readiness by:

- Increasing language and literacy skills;
- Enhancing social-emotional development; and
- Strengthening the parent-child relationship.

Caseload Data:

PCHPs are located nationwide

Cost:

According to Congressional Research Service, the cost of delivering PCHP is an average of \$2,187 per family.

Evidence:

Research dating back to 1965 when the program first began;
California Evidence-Based Clearinghouse for Child Welfare
Congressional Research Service

Assessment:

Family assessments conducted by paraprofessionals (called “Home Visitors”) trained by Parent-Child Home Program staff.

Operation in

Washington:

In Washington State there are 6 sites: Seattle - Rainer Beach Center, Neighborhood House, New Holly area, Rainier Vista, and Southwest Youth and Family Services; Yakima - Highland School District and West Valley School Districts.

Description of Services:

- During twice-weekly visits with parents and children, home visitors model reading, play, and conversation activities to demonstrate how to build language and literacy skills.
- Curricular materials, quality children’s books and educational toys are given to the families on a weekly basis, providing children with the materials they will encounter in school and creating an ongoing culture of literacy in the home. Over two years of program participation, families acquire educational toys and a library of children’s books.

- During visits with parents and children, the home visitor models verbal interaction, reading, and play activities, demonstrating how to use the books and toys to cultivate language and literacy skills to promote school readiness. These activities are carefully designed to enhance the child's cognitive and social-emotional development.
- Home visitors are typically paraprofessionals. They are not required to have bachelor's degree in social work, education, or nursing, but some do. Some are also former recipients of PCHP services (about one-third per a 2003 study).
- Home visitors receive training in multicultural awareness and the ethics of home visiting. Visitors model, rather than teach, behaviors to parents as the most effective, non-intimidating way to empower parents and strengthen the quality of parent-child interactions.

Eligibility: Low income parents with limited education and language and literacy barriers

Findings:

- Early childhood research demonstrates that the influence of early family and social risk factors on children's later adjustments is mediated through two indicators: the affective relationship between the child and the primary care-giver and the provision of language and literacy stimulation in the home.
- Indiana University of Pennsylvania's independent evaluation of Parent-Child Home Program replications in two Pennsylvania counties indicates that positive parenting behaviors increased dramatically as a result of program participation:
 - Half of the children identified as "at risk" in their home environments at the start were found to be no longer at risk at the completion of the program.
 - The number of positive interactions between parent and child increased significantly during program participation, including instances of praise and/or encouragement observed by researchers.
- The Parent-Child Home Program utilizes a model of early intervention and remediation that can result in long-term savings by increasing school readiness and reducing the need for school-age special education. An independent study, conducted by the City of New York Office of the Comptroller, calculates savings from the reduced need for special education services for Parent-Child Home Program graduates at \$210,000 per child.
- Participating in home visiting programs yields long-term economic benefits. An independent report produced by the City of New York Office of the Comptroller estimates that participation in the Parent-Child Home Program could increase a participant's lifetime earnings potential by between \$600,000 and \$1 million dollars.
- Another independent study of the job creation and earnings creation effects of the Parent-Child Home Program shows that the Program increases state residents' earnings by 5.66%.
- The study finds that the Parent-Child Home Program has such a high ratio of earnings effect to net program costs because the Program achieves a considerable increase in the high school graduation rate at a relatively low two-year program cost per child (\$4500).
- The study estimates that if the Parent-Child Home Program were implemented nationally the long-term annual effects (by 2088) on the economy would be: 300,000 jobs, \$53 billion in generated earnings, \$42 billion in annual government revenue.

Implications for Policymakers and Program Developers to Consider:

Independent studies of the return of investment of early childhood programs reveal that early education investments yield a return that exceeds the return of most public projects that are considered economic development.

Resources: www.parent-child.org; California Evidence-Based Clearinghouse for Child Welfare - www.cebc4cw.org/search/topical-area/18; www.preventchildabusesb.org/CRSHomeVisitReportOct2009.pdf;

http://futureofchildren.org/publications/author-bios/author_show.xml?autid=44.

Recommended by Seth Chamberlain, ACF and Lauren Supplee, and California Evidence-based Clearinghouse for Child Welfare as a promising program for home-visiting services

Child Trends, "What Works for Home Visiting Programs," 7/27/2010* www.childtrends.org;

California Evidence-Based Clearinghouse for Child Welfare, www.cebc4cw.org/search/topical-area/18;

Literature reviews and meta-analyses by Sweet, M.A. and Applebaum, M.I. (*Home Visiting Best Practices: A Review of the Literature, May 2007* - www.birth-beyond.com/ and Deanna Gomby (*Home Visitation in 2005: Outcomes for Children and Parents* – www.ced.org/projects/kids.shtml/#new)

Kimberly S. Howard and Jeanne Brooks-Gunn in "The Future of Children" latest issue; (Journal Issue: Preventing Child Maltreatment Volume 19 Number 2 Fall 2009)

<http://futureofchildren.org/futureofchildren/publications/journals/article/index.xml?journalid=71&articleid=514>

Congressional Research Service report Home Visitation for Families with Young Children by Karen E. Lynch & Emilie Stoltzfus, 10/23/2009**

www.preventchildabusesb.org/CRSHomeVisitReportOct2009.pdf

The PCHP program can be found in 14 states, including California, Florida, Pennsylvania, Washington, DC, and Washington States. There are also PCHP programs in Bermuda, Canada, and Ireland.